

## Home by Portia77

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**Genre:** Drabble Collection, Gen, Other Additional Tags to Be Added, Spoilers, basically just Eleven and Hopper being fam for the first while, eventually Mileven, might eventually take plot shape, who knows - Freeform

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Dustin Henderson, Eleven (Stranger Things), Jim "Chief" Hopper, Joyce Byers, Lucas Sinclair, Max (Stranger Things), Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler, Steve Harrington, Will Byers, basically everyone

**Relationships:** Eleven & Jim "Chief" Hopper, Eleven/Mike Wheeler, Jonathan Byers/Nancy Wheeler

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**Summary:**

This is a drabble collection. I'll add the latest chapter summary here with each post.

Chapter 2: Mike and Eleven meet after she closes the gate, and I forget what 'drabble' means.

## 1. Reflection

### Author's Note:

Eleven's nickname is spelled Elle in this because 'El' just isn't a name to me. Lol.

Also I wrote this in one go. There's probably too many run-ons. So I got excited--sue me.

(Actually don't sue me, pls and thnx).

Jim Hopper rings the Byers' house once he's got Eleven back home—at *their* home, safe and secure—and lets Jonathan know that she's okay, the gate's closed, it's over.

But then he can hear Mike shouting in the background, probably outraged once he realized Hopper has taken Elle to *his* home for the night, rather than back to the Byers'.

"Put the kid on the phone," he says finally, rolling his eyes and swearing that he's too damn tired and old and really just too *tired* to deal with this shit.

*"Where's Elle? We've been waiting all night—"*

"Look, she's asleep, alright?" Hopper glanced over his shoulder at the bundle of blankets, a bloody nose and a mop of curls. She's out like a light, didn't even wake when he carried her from the car, her head lolling against his chest.

*"You should've brought her here! We haven't seen her for—"*

"Hey. Listen to me!" Hopper uses his best police-chief voice, remembering a split second later to keep it down or risk waking the tough little champ asleep on the couch.

"You can see her *tomorrow*. If she's not able to visit, I'm sure your sister can drive you. Is that fair?"

It's a compromise, he realizes, and in his head he can hear Eleven

whisper *halfway happy* back at him, as she cuts into her damned Eggos.

“*Fine...*” There’s a pause, and then, “*You’ll tell her I called?? Soon as she’s up?*”

“Yeah, yeah.” He stays on the phone long enough to get the kid’s home phone number and, reluctantly, he gives their number to Mike as well.

After making promising yet again to call Mike first thing in the morning, Hopper hangs up the phone and stumbles over to the couch.

He’s tired. He’s *so* tired, and *he* didn’t even have to close the goddamned gate to the upside-down—or whatever the hell it is. The blood on Elle’s face has dried and crusted, but he can’t bring himself to letting her go to bed like this, can’t let her wake up covered in her own blood.

With a warm rag, he steps into the all-too-familiar shoes of Nurse Hopper, who can stomach practically living in the child’s cancer ward for *months*, and clean up vomit and diarrhea and blood without a problem, but give him tears to deal with?

That’s a whole other story.

In no time at all, Elle’s face is clean, and Hopper can stop reliving the flashbacks not only of Sarah but of *Elle* now too, watching her levitate in the air and scream—scream so loud like her lungs would burst—and then watching her *fall*, and feeling the fear that had clawed up from his heart to his throat like bile.

He can push all those memories down into the vault he keeps them in called “pain” which is right next to “love” because sometimes, they’re just so damn alike.

With a clean face, it’s easier to pretend Elle is just sleeping to the unobservant eye, but it’s also easier now to see how pale she is, see the bruises of sleepless nights under her eyes.

*Where the hell did you go, kid?*

Unintentionally, his hand starts to drift through her curls as he stares and thinks and, mostly, broods, rehashing the past twenty-four hours over in his mind like it's on an endless loop.

Bob dying.

Will almost dying. So many times.

Joyce alone on her bed, alone. So fucking alone.

Trying to outsmart the shadow-monster.

Being attacked by the shadow-monster.

Being saved by Eleven and feeling that same relief and anger in one breath, that feeling of *thank god she's safe* and *why is she here? Where has she been?*

Watching the look of happiness on her face when she saw Mike. Thinking that look alone maybe made all his fears worth it.

Then there was the ride in the truck when he apologized and she did too—sorta—and she asked him about Sarah, and she's probably the only person in the world who he can bring himself to tell her about.

The feeling of her tiny palm sliding against his.

Then there was the gate. Plunging into the cavern of red, glowing light and tall, crackling shadows. Seeing the fear and doubt and dismay fill Elle's face as she stared at the impossible task before her. Watching in awe as she summoned the strength from god-knows-where to close the mile-high gaping hole with a blood-curling scream.

Seeing her sink to the elevator floor with a thud.

And then?

*Fear.*

So much fear. Fear that she had used up too much strength, *all* her strength, fear that she was gone and he hadn't said so many things to

her that he needed to say as much as she probably needed to hear.

And he recalled the feeling of her breath against his neck, the sound of her weeping next to his ear as he cradled her as close as he could. It was an awkward angle to hold her at, he had to hunch over her and haul up straight up, but *god* it was worth the discomfort, to be able to hold her and kiss her hair and tell her just how fucking *good* she was.

Which, somehow, someway, brought them to this moment. Jim Hopper, chief of police in Hawkins, Indiana, stroking the sweaty, damp curls of a 12-year-old girl who had so much courage and kindness and, oh yeah, the ability to move things with her mind.

But that didn't matter so much now.

Will Byers was alive and safe—again. The threat of the supernatural was gone—again. Lives had been lost—*again*—but tomorrow could be the slow start of the town's healing, maybe, and with any luck, it could mean the start of a normal life for Elle.

Just maybe.

"I'm so damned proud of you," he whispers, voice taut.

(Just how many times does he plan on crying tonight *anyways*? Jesus Christ).

Hopper swallowed loudly, privately glad no one was there to see, and said to sleeping Elle, "I'm gonna look after *you* from now on. Promise."

## 2. Reunited (and it feels so good)

### Summary for the Chapter:

Chapter two: Mike and Eleven meet again after closing the gate, and apparently I don't know what 'drabble' means.

The sound of tires rolling up the Byers' driveway sends three boys scrambling over their feet to the front window.

"She's here!" shouts Mike, pressing his face so hard against the window that his breath steamed and droplets formed on the glass. He led the charge outside, sprinting into the November air with no coat and no shoes, too excited to listen to Steve Harrington shouting at them all to wait indoors.

He came to a halt a few feet from the truck, all but dancing on his tiptoes with a hopeful, wide-eyed look on his face as he waited impatiently.

Hopper got out first, wearing his hat and his usual scowl, though he did nod at them all in way of greeting. Without a word, he walked to the passenger side and opened the door, reaching where Mike couldn't see.

The chief of police said something they couldn't make out, paused as he fumbled briefly, and then stepped back, his arms bundled with what looked like a mountain of sweaters and scarves and flannel.

"Elle!" Mike's heart did that same flip-flop, fluttering sensation it always did when he saw Eleven, and his face split into a brilliant grin.

Only for it to fall off his face half a second later.

"Elle?"

Although the tiny person in Hopper's arms was unmistakably the same girl Mike and his friends found in the woods a year ago, she looked nothing like Mike remembered her being, even from the night

before.

Two heavy-lidded doe eyes peer out from over Hopper's arms, and she offers a tired, sweet as honey smile for them, mouthing *Mike* as she's carried over. Her face is pale and a bit sweaty, clammy looking.

"Are you okay?" Mike asks worriedly, and Dustin and Lucas echoed his anxious questions.

It's Hopper who answers. "She'll be fine. Go get the door." When none of them move, his lip curls and he emits a surly growl—"Now!"

Max beat the others to the punch, bracing the door open for Hopper and Elle and then heading inside, letting it fall on the rest of them. Dustin snickers when the doorknob almost whacks Mike in the face.

"Shut up," he grouses.

Inside the house, Hopper is flooded with as many questions as he had been outside, and it is clear his patience is wearing dangerously thin. Elle, for her part, let him set her on the couch and sat there in silence, smiling tremulously as Mike hugged her and Dustin patted her shoulder. In her arms is a teddy bear, which she cradles close to her chest as the boys take turns spewing questions at her.

"How are you feeling?"

"How'd ya close the gate?"

"What did it look like? Was it huge?"

"Did you see the mind flayer?"

"*Enough!*" The force of Hopper's voice thunders in the tiny living room, and with one massive paw, he swipes at Dustin and Lucas to move them back a few paces—not applying any real pressure. "Let her breathe, Jesus Christ."

Frazzled and disheveled, Joyce came running down the hall at all the commotion, Nancy and Jonathan hot on her heels.

"What-what?" Joyce sprinted into the living room, breathless. It was

a tense moment before her eyes landed on Hopper, then Elle, and her whole body softened. “Oh! Hi honey.” Almost at once, Mrs. Byers has her arms wrapped around Eleven, pressing her head under her chin. Eleven tucks herself into the embrace, but doesn’t lift her arms to hold her back.

She sniffles weakly. “Will?”

“He’s *fine*. He’s got a fever, but he’ll be fine.” Joyce’s hands smooth over Elle’s curls, damp and messy, not like the slick-back look she’d sported last night. They look washed. “My brave girl.”

Mike’s gaze diverts from Joyce and Elle’s tired face, up to Hopper, who is staring at the two with an indiscernible look on his face.

“Will’s sick?” he asks quietly, and Joyce finally relinquishes her hold on Eleven so Mike can take his place at her side again.

Joyce wiped at her eyes. “He’ll be okay. We had to crank the heat up pretty high—I’m not surprised he’s not well. He’s already asking about getting something to eat besides broth.”

Hopper grunted, lost in thought. “Perhaps we should go... I brought her over because I have to go to work and she’s, well...”

They were clearly in their own adult conversation, but it didn’t mean Mike and the kids couldn’t understand their words. Besides, even if Hopper hadn’t said something, anyone could’ve guessed that Elle wasn’t feeling her best.

Not by a long shot.

“Can she stay with you for the day?” Hopper and Joyce walk over to the far corner to whisper to each other, and even though Mike just wants to sit and talk to Elle, he strains his ears to make out their conversation, hushed as it is.

“Fever...sluggish...vomiting...”

“Of course...stay here...with Will.”

Mike reached in through the layers of flannel and fabric and found



Elle's hand, giving her a reassuring squeeze. "You're gonna be okay," he says confidently. "We'll take care of you. Friends take care of each other."

"That's right."

"Mhmm." Lucas and Dustin bob their heads up and down insistently. Max is sitting in the other side of the room, sullen and silent.

"Friends," Elle croaks, but she seems comforted by the word. Her eyes turned away from Mike, looking somewhere over his head. "Hop?"

Mike didn't hear the chief approaching until he was standing right behind him. Respectfully, knowing better than to push his luck right now, Mike stepped aside for just a moment, while Hopper leaned close to Elle.

"Hey kid. I'll be back tonight, okay?" His hand ruffles her curls very gently, like he's scared about jostling her around too much.

"Five-one-five." The words sounded more like a command than a question, and Hopper actually *laughs*.

Mike and his friends exchange faces with raised eyebrows.

"I'll try. Might be a bit late." Hopper's cupped his hand to Elle's forehead and he made a sound in his throat of deep displeasure. "*Shit*. You're still warm. Joyce?"

"I'll get something right now," she assured, and vanished down the hall, true to her word.

Elle latched onto Hopper's sleeve. "Stay?" The tiny question was whispered through teary eyes.

Hopper moved from his kneeling stance to sit at her side. "Ahh, I wish I could, kiddo," he speaks in the nicest voice Mike has ever heard the chief use.

"I really do. But I have a lot of work to do, and I'm already late. I'll be back before you know it, and hopefully you're feeling better by

this evening okay?" Hopper's face lights up with an idea. "Hey, that's your job today. Rest and feel better."

"Yes," Elle rasps with a dutiful nod, and he gently bumps his knuckles under her chin, an subtly proud gesture that makes Elle smile.

"Good. I'll see you soon." He gives her hair one last tousle and makes for the door.

Elle says, "Soon." But she looks unbelievably sad to see him go, and something dark and ugly blooms unexpectedly in Mike's chest.

The feeling goes away almost immediately when she turns her attention back to him, beckoning him to sit on the couch with her. (He obliges happily).

Nancy and Jonathan drift from the living room back to whatever they were doing earlier – cleaning from the mess last night, Mike suspects, although that doesn't explain what Steve is doing here.

"Okay," Joyce comes back with a pill bottle in her hands, her eyes narrowed as she reads the instruction meticulously. "One child's Advil, coming up!"

Elle plainly doesn't know what it is, but she accepts the medicine and water without complaint or question. That, alone, is telling of how tuckered out she is.

Meanwhile, Joyce begins lecturing the boys in much gentler terms than Hopper would do.

"Now boys—and Max, dear—you have to keep things down today. Will and Elle aren't feeling well, and they need *rest*. Okay?"

They all nod solemnly, but Mike knows deep down there's no way in hell he'll be dragged from Elle's side right now.

Not when he's just got her back.

"I'll watch them, Mrs. Byers," Steve says, stepping back into the house, sporting thick black gloves and horrible bruising from the

beating he took last night from Billy.

Joyce makes a sound of doubt. "Oh, Steven, are you *sure* you don't need a hospital?"

But the teen leaned against the door (possibly to keep from passing out) and smiled blandly. "Me? Hospital? Psh. I've never felt better."

And he winks, then grimaces because clearly the gesture causes excruciating pain.

"Well. At least sit down," she urges and frets, and Steve staggers into the chair across from the couch, both hands raised in surrender.

With a last nod of satisfaction, Joyce walked back down the hall, undoubtedly to sit with Will again—or perhaps to cry in her bedroom for Bob.

In the living room, the boys have started taking turns asking Elle questions about last night. She answers, as best she can, but even though her vocabulary seems better, her breath grows labored and weak in minutes.

"Alright shitheads. Enough pestering the girl." Steve nods at Elle, remembering Max sitting in the corner. "I mean *that* girl. Give her a rest."

"We could...tell you about what you've missed?" Mike suggests suddenly, and the others all perk up.

"We won the science fair!" Dustin shouts, and Mike and Lucas fall atop each other to try and tell the story of triumph.

Elle's eyes, wide and excited, rove between the three of them, trying to keep up with the words. She can't understand the science part at first, which distresses Dustin enough to getting a pad of paper and a pencil, and he starts scribbling things out that resemble the experiment the four of them had tried.

"What are you doing?"

Everyone looks up at Will, who is standing with the help of Jonathan

and Nancy at either side. He smiles nervously at the others, and this time, Max is with Dustin and Lucas when they run up to hug him carefully.

Mike goes last, ducking his head slightly to embrace the skinnier boy. Will has always been the tiniest in the group, but he's never felt so small before. Seeing him go through the hell he's been in for the past year, seeing him almost *die*, has shaken Mike to his core.

"How are you?" he asks lowly, but Will just shrugs noncommittally. He turned his gaze to Elle instead, who is looking at him with a timid smile.

"Will," she says knowingly, and pulls her feet in to make room on the couch for him. When he's settled with Jonathan's help, their feet are squished together and Will is smiling equally shyly at Elle.

"It's nice to meet you finally," he says, as Jonathan tries to wrap him in blankets. Will frowns irritably. "I'm not a baby—you don't have to *swaddle* me."

The older Byers kid is flustered but unrelenting. "I know, just... It's cold, and the window..."

He's talking about the window that Elle shattered with the dead demodog, Mike realizes. Steve helped patch it up as best as he could, with 'help' from the kids that mostly consisted of Steve doing all the work and swearing half-heartedly at them and Dustin cajoling Steve into being nice and Lucas and Max blushing whenever their hands touched.

Mike had been preoccupied at the time, sullen even, with one best friend unconscious in bed and the other, hurting somewhere far away from him.

But having them both here, sitting on the couch and grinning at each other, even nervously, makes his heart swell.

"Will," Elle says again, patting his foot lightly. "You're...okay?"

Will frowns a bit to himself. "Yeah, I...I'm okay."

And Mike knows innately that Will is probably beating himself up about Bob, that grieving for the plump, kind-hearted man will take a long time, and he makes a mental note to talk to Will about it as soon as he gets a chance.

For now, he's happy to let the untruth be.

"I've heard a lot about you," Will says, apparently happy to not talk about himself for long. "When I... Last year, the guys wouldn't shut up about you." He rolled his eyes, but there's a smile on his face so Elle knows he's teasing.

"He's telling the truth," Nancy pipes up from her seat on the arm of the couch. Jonathan stands behind her with a hand curled discreetly against her hip, and Mike wonders a bit at *that* development.

(Steve disappears without a word.)

"Mike even has a shrine for you," Nancy keeps going, a bit oblivious to poor Steve's misery. She is determined to get to know the little girl her brother so clearly adores.

"Do not!"

"No? What do you call the tent in the basement?" she laughs, and Mike replies instantly.

"It's where she slept! I was keeping it in case...in case..." he trails off uncertainly.

"I came back?" Elle asks, looking sad.

Mike nods. "Told you we never gave up on you." Unthinkingly, Mike reaches out and holds Elle's hand, a bit surprised when Dustin and Lucas and Will have *all* reached out to pat her foot or her shoulder with a smile.

"Friends," she murmurs to herself, almost wonderingly.

"Part of the party," Mike reassures, and the boys all nod. Max huffs quietly in the corner, and Mike, who has never cared a fig about Max, suddenly finds it quite difficult to be resentful of her any longer.

But Elle has all his attention right now. “You tired?” Mike pulls a pillow from under the couch and holds it up for the supernaturally gifted kid. “You can sleep if you want.”

“Maybe she’d be more comfortable on Will’s bed?” Jonathan says, leaning against the wall, and Nancy nods in approval.

Elle protests at once. “Stay!” she begs. “I want to stay.”

“Okay!” Jonathan holds his hands up in supplication. “Okay! How about lunch instead?”

“I can make sandwiches?” Nancy offers, and within twenty minutes, everyone has a glass of milk and a sandwich à la Nancy Wheeler.

Jonathan drags out all the blankets they can find and piles them on the floor in front of the couch, so they can have a weird indoor picnic together. Joyce is sleeping, Jonathan tells them, but Nancy does manage to drag up Steve from wherever he was hiding.

Harrington still looks a bit miserable as he collapses to the blanketed-floor with a thud, but at least he perks up when Dustin offers him a sandwich, and scowls when Max teases him about getting her own car.

The conversation and company is oddly companionable, considering the strange circumstances that have brought them together. “This is weird,” Nancy says suddenly, wiping the corner of her mouth where a globule of mustard had stuck. “*We’re* weird.”

Jonathan takes a bite of his sandwich and shrugs. “So what? I like weird.”

And Steve scoffs quietly, but immediately offers everyone (especially Nancy) an apologetic grin. “Yeah... There’s definitely worse things to be.”

“David Bowie is weird,” Will interjects from the couch, and he and Jonathan share a laugh over what must be an inside joke.

“David...Bowie?” Elle wrinkles her nose. She is ready to nap, but the boys just don’t know how to be quiet, and she doesn’t want to ask.

Besides, she has missed conversation, missed the chatter of someone besides Hopper in her ear.

“You don’t know David Bowie?” Nancy asks her, turning to her--whatever Jonathan is to her now--with a smirk. “I bet Jonathan could fix that.”

“He better put on some real music too,” Steve grumbles, but it’s mostly good-natured.

“You don’t mess around with Jim,” Elle declares, and the crowd of kids stare blankly at her. “It’s music,” she adds, unfazed by their reactions, and everyone accepts her answer without complaint.

They spend the afternoon listening to Jonathan’s mix tapes and Steve only grimaces a little at his selection, eventually too preoccupied with teaching the boys some “actual goddamn dance moves” after watching them bop around with zero coordination.

Will and Elle both fall asleep on the couch in the late afternoon, and Jonathan suggests turning on the TV, which is coincidentally around the time when Steve says he’s gotta head home and Nancy makes a comment about her mom worrying over her and Mike.

“I wanna stay with Elle,” he argues instantly, as Nancy gathers their belongings. Dustin and Lucas and Max follow Steve outside to say bye, trailing after him even as he grumbles about them being a bunch of little asshole kids.

“I know,” Nancy says, zipping her coat. “But mom is gonna be worried sick soon, and you have school tomorrow. Besides, Hopper will be here for her soon, I’m sure.”

“But Nance—”

“No buts! We’ve hung around long enough.” It’s her mom-voice, the one Mike hates, especially now when he’s finally got Will and Elle with him again.

He turned to Elle, who is fast asleep, and bit his lip, torn on what the right thing to do was. He wanted to let her rest, of course, but at the same time, the idea of leaving without saying bye made him feel

absurdly guilty.

The decision was taken from his hands, thankfully, when Hopper's truck pulled into the Byer's driveway for the second time that day. Mike could hear him talking to Steve and the others outside, a low grumbling of noise that was unmistakably Hopper.

Elle's eyes open a smidge as she squinted up at Mike in the low light of the evening. "Mike?"

"Hey Elle. I, uh, I gotta go. And Hopper's here." Emotions war with one another on her face, both sad to say bye and happy to hear Hopper is back.

Sure enough, the police chief himself steps inside, boots thudding loudly on the wooden floor.

"You're late," Elle grumbles, and Mike just offers a sullen hello.

"Well, aren't you all just rays of sunshine?" Hopper glances around the room. "Where's Joyce?"

"Sleeping," Elle says with a yawn. "Sad."

He grimaces a bit. "Yeah... I know." Hopper narrows his eyes on Elle a bit. "What'd I say about speaking in full sentences?"

"Tired." Elle doesn't look bothered by his tone in the slightest. "*Tired-tired.*"

And just like this morning, Hopper's fingers sweep across her face, her cheeks and her forehead. Some of the strain in his body lessens visibly.

"You aren't burning anymore, at least." Hopper heads down the hall. "I'm gonna let Joyce know we're going. Say bye to Mike, kid."

Stupidly, absurdly, as soon as they are left to say their goodbyes, Mike feels his throat close up and tears blurring his vision. "I'll see you soon," he promises, holding both her hands in his. Will is passed out, so there's no one to see him acting like a giant baby, only Elle—and it's not so bad crying in front of her.



“Mike.” For her part, Elle is just as unhappy, hiccupping as her eyelashes grew wet and sticky. “*Mike.*”

“I know,” he says hoarsely, because he knows exactly what she is trying to say, even though neither of them have the right words for it. “Next time, maybe... Maybe I can see you alone? Just us two.”

“Okay,” Elle whispers, and they hug for just a second. Just a second is all they have, for Hopper has returned with Joyce at his side. Neither adult speak a word of the hug they’d witnessed, and Hopper approaches them with his typical solemnity.

“Ready?”

Elle nods, but when Hopper sees her tears and Mike’s red eyes, he pauses, makes a face of deep self-loathing and crouches down in front of them both.

“Look,” he begins firmly, tilting his head up at them. “It won’t be like last time, okay? You can see each other more now. Not *every* day, but definitely more. That’s *my* promise to both of you.”

Mike isn’t fully convinced, considering this is coming from the man who lied and lied and *lied* for a year about Elle’s whereabouts, but Elle must believe him, as she offers a sincere “thank you,” and for now, Elle’s trust is enough for Mike.

“Thank you, sir,” he says respectfully, and maybe he’s trying to redeem himself just a little bit after the fight last night.

Flustered and a bit red in the face himself, Hopper bobs his head up and down stiffly. “Alright. C’mon kiddo, let’s get you home.”

### **Notes for the Chapter:**

I'm not thrilleddddd with this - it kinda goes nowhere and feels just blah. But it's complete and it took me forever, so I figured I'd post it for my sanity, if nothing else.

Thanks, as always, for reading.

PS, Max will get her moment with Eleven. She won't always be sullen and sulking in the corner, promise.

### **Author's Note:**

All I wanted as soon as we got character development from Hopper and Eleven, way back in season one, was for them to somehow become an adopted family and IT'S LITERALLY HAPPENING, HOLY FUCK, MY HEART. I spent the entirety of season two squee-ing and weeping over them and their perfectness--I even love when they fight, they're like two children going head-to-head, I love it. I love them.

So yeah, I have a few other drabbles written up. Legit all Hopper&Elle feels right now though, but I 100% get them mileven feels so DON'T YOU WORRY FAM. Portia's got you covered.